

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 /086 W

-----080907Z 112301 /22

R 080645Z JAN 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4309

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 00015

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS PINS ET SU

SUBJECT: ERITREAN REACTION TO SUDANESE-ETHIOPIAN RIFT

REF: ASMARA 1097 (291300Z DEC 76)

1. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, ERITREANS ARE UNIVERSALLY ELATED BY THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN ADDIS AND KHARTOUM. VIEWING THE CONFLICT WITH THEIR OWN NARROW OPTIC, THEY SEE THE GOS DRIVEN INTO CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH ERITREAN INSURGENTS IN THE GOS' EFFORT TO APPLY PRESSURE ON THE EPMG TO REMOVE THE ANSARS' CAMPS. WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A QUANTUM INCREASE IN GOS ASSISTANCE, THE ERITREANS BELIEVE THEY CANNOT FAIL TO PROFIT FROM THE FRICTION, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A SHORT THOUGH POSSIBLY
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CRITICAL PERIOD. ERITREANS WERE PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO HEAR NIMEIRI SPEAK OF ARMING ERITREAN AND ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES IN THE EVENT THAT THE GOS WERE TO ATTACK THE EPMG. INSURGENT SUPPORTERS IN ASMARA SEEM CERTAIN THAT THE DISPUTE WILL HEARTEN THE REBELS IN THE FIELD AND WILL BE REFLECTED IN TERMS OF MILITARY SUCCESSES.

2. ERITREANS ARE NOT CONCERNED THAT BY HIS STATEMENTS, NIMEIRI

HAS RELINQUISHED AT LEAST TEMPORARILY HIS POSITION TO MEDIATE THE ERITREAN-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE. WHILE THEY STILL HOPE THAT NIMEIRI WOULD EVENTUALLY ACT IN THIS CAPACITY, THEY ASSERT THAT THE EPMG HAS YET TO OFFER SUFFICIENTLY TANGIBLE AND CON-
SESSIONARY PROPOSALS WHICH MIGHT FORM THE BASIS FOR A NEGOT-
IATED SETTLEMENT. THEREFORE NIMEIRI'S WITHDRAWAL AT THIS TIME IS NOT VIEWED AS SIGNIFICANT.

3. A VISIT BY THE APO TO THE SUDANESE CONSULATE BELIEVE LOCAL RUMORS THAT THE ETHIOPIAN-SUDANESE SITUATION HAD DETERIORATED SO BADLY THAT THE SUDANESE CONSUL GENERAL HAD FLED. CG ABDALLAH SAID THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, IT HAS BEEN "BUSINESS AS USUAL" FOR HIM SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF THE GOS-EPMG VERBAL EXCHANGES. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE CONTINUING PRIVILEGE ABDALLAH ENJOYS, HE WAS PERMITTED BY ASMARA AIRPORT AUTHORITIES TO CONFER AT PLANESIDE WITH HIS RECALLED AMBASSADOR ON THE MORNING OF JAN. 3; NO MEAN ACCOMPLISHMENT GIVEN THE RIGID SECURITY AT THAT AIRPORT. HE CONSIDERS THE CURRENT DISPUTE SERIOUS BUT NOT YET CRITICAL. HE SEES THE BALL BEING SQUARELY IN THE EPMG'S COURT, AND UNLESS THE ETHIOPIANS TAKE SOME POSITIVE STEPS AGAINST THE ANSARS, THE CONFLICT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY BITTER. HE AGREES, HOW-
EVER, THAT ARMED HOSTILITIES ARE NOT IMMINENT, ALTHOUGH ANY AGGRESSIVE ACTION BY THE ANSARS WOULD DECISIVELY BE COUNTERED BY THE SUDANESE ARMY.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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